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WWFOR seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, equality, peace and justice. It links and strengthens FOR members and chapters throughout Western Washington in promoting activities consistent with the national FOR statement of purpose. WWFOR helps members and chapters accomplish together what we could not accomplish alone.

Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation
Fall Gathering
Saturday, November 23, 2024 on Zoom
details to be announced soon
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NUCLEAR WAR IS IMMINENT : UNLESS THE U.S. EMBRACES PEACE – AND SOON!

by Gerry Condon, Antiwar.com. **Gerry Condon** is a Vietnam-era veteran and war resister who serves on the Board of Directors of Veterans For Peace and coordinates its Nuclear Abolition Working Group.

The world is headed toward nuclear war. The horrific nightmare of global destruction that has haunted humanity ever since Hiroshima and Nagasaki is nearly upon us. For decades, peace activists and nuclear experts have warned about the “growing danger of nuclear war.” The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* has moved the hands of their *Doomsday Clock* all the way to 90 seconds! How much closer can we get? Are these dire warnings being dismissed like the man with the sign shouting “The End Is Near?”

The original nuclear powers, the U.S., Russia, China, France and the UK – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – never followed the commitment they made when they signed and ratified the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which required them to “begin good-faith negotiations for the total elimination of nuclear

weapons.” Instead they have poured billions of dollars into “modernizing” nuclear weapons. In the meantime, four more countries have joined the nuclear club – India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.

After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact military alliance of the Soviet Union, there was an opportunity for a broad peace in Europe. NATO, an anti-Soviet military alliance led by the U.S., should have disbanded at that point. Instead, it pursued an aggressive policy against a weakened Russia, surrounding it with hostile military forces, including nuclear weapons.

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In 2002, President George W. Bush unilaterally removed the U.S. from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, while placing a U.S. missile base in Romania. In 2019, President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty that had lowered nuclear tensions in Europe, while placing another U.S. missile base in Poland. What were the Russians to think? The U.S. is clearly seeking a dominant nuclear position.

Neoconservative war hawks – or “Neocons” – have captured the foreign policy machinery of Democratic and Republican administrations. Given the declining economic power of the U.S. vis-à-vis a rising China, the Neocons believe the U.S. must aggressively employ its military superiority to maintain global dominance. The U.S. maintains 850 foreign military bases in over 80 countries (compared to a handful each for Russia and China).

Western politicians and pundits frequently accuse Russian president Vladimir Putin of making “nuclear threats.” Indeed, Putin keeps reminding the world of Russia’s nuclear rules of engagement. Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first if it is attacked by the superior conventional forces of NATO. The U.S. has a similar nuclear posture – it will use nuclear weapons first, even against non-nuclear threats such as a cyber-attack. As Daniel Ellsberg reminded us, to

possess nuclear weapons is to use them every day, like a gun pointed at someone’s head.

Apparently oblivious to the imminent threat of nuclear war, President Biden continues to pour billions of dollars of weapons into its proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, while blocking peace negotiations. The Biden



administration is simultaneously sending billions in weapons to Israel as it commits a horrific and ongoing genocide in Gaza. Israel threatens other Middle Eastern countries with its U.S.-backed military, including nuclear weapons. Can anybody now doubt that they would use them?

The Neocons are also actively preparing for a war against China. The U.S. is encouraging Taiwan’s independence from China, conducting provocative “freedom of navigation” operations in the Taiwan Straits and South China Sea, and building anti-China military alliances throughout the Pacific. One of the few foreign policy debates in Congress is which war should take precedence – the war against Russia or the war against China. Both are nuclear powers. Then there is the joint US/South Korean military exercises aimed at the “decapitation” of the government of North Korea, another nuclear power. What could possibly go wrong?

Glen Anderson Presente!

Olympia activist Glen Anderson died July 12, 2024. Glen was one of the founders of the Olympia chapter of Fellowship of Reconciliation in 1976, and for many years his activism in Olympia FOR was like an unpaid full-time job, even when Glen was still working in his actual full-time paid job. In the past few years, Glen spent much of his activist time producing his monthly TV show, but he still nurtured and attended Olympia FOR's twice weekly peace vigils. Glen was also a stalwart of Western Washington FOR, and served in many capacities including secretary, membership and chapter development, fundraising, and conference organizing.

Glen served on the Board of FOR-USA and reported to WWFOR on national activities and decisions. Glen excelled in drawing people into FOR; every vigil was an opportunity to introduce new people to the organization. Glen was also a founder in 2016 of the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, OCANW, in which Olympia FOR joined with other organizations creating a strong coalition of peace activists. Glen often offered free courses to the community on grassroots organizing, nonviolence, and nuclear weapons. We remember Glen for his enduring belief that people could make a difference, his prodigious work, his sense of humor, and his kindness.

You can see Glen and some of the material he put on his website and some of his latest TV shows <https://parallaxperspectives.org/>

A WWFOR Member D'vorah Kost on Trying To Make a Difference in the Lives of Gazan Families

In my 5 decades of protesting war, never have I *personally known* and been in steady contact with the people living the war. Never have I personally known and loved whole families grappling with the unfathomable decisions of where to run for safety, who should get out of the killing fields of Gaza first while leaving family members behind, because the cost for the whole family's travel is prohibitive. For a Gazan to escape to Egypt, they need \$5000 USD per adult, \$2500 per child, and someone in Cairo to have those US dollars to register them. The process of obtaining USD in Cairo, registering Gazans at a sporadically opened office, then waiting weeks for actual border crossings while bombs explode everywhere, is excruciatingly complex and frustrating all along the way. Some people are killed before their name comes

up to cross. Daily insults are added to chronic injury, time and time again. They want the world to know their stories. There are so many.

Mira Diab, 25, my 'Gazan daughter-in-love', 7 months pregnant with her first baby at the start of the war, delivered a full-term still-born baby boy, in Rafah, Nov. 30th because of untreated high blood pressure due stress. I was able to get her and her husband out of Gaza on December 15. Her mother, Wejdan, and 2 brothers remained trapped in Rafah. Leaving them behind devastated Mira and I realized I could be with her sooner than her mom could. I flew out of SeaTac for Cairo on January 22, my arms ready to hug and comfort her.

From Cairo I could do much more than from Seattle, and I set to work raising funds and tapping into my ample savings to bring out Wejdan and her sons and 20 more members of the extended family. How could I not put everything I have and everything I am into ameliorating the horrors of this genocide, at least for one family, AND for ME. I desperately needed to feel less helpless. Donating to the large NGO's is certainly one important way to help, but not everyone gets served by them.

My friend Ahmad Mushtaha, who I met online several years ago is in northern Gaza. Ahmad founded Gaza Circus School. Because I love circus, I have supported his school and come to know him and love him and his circus, in cyberspace, through Messenger.

Ahmed sends me audio messages without words, just the sound of explosions. He wants to bring me into his world, and I want to be brought there.

For him and all Gazans, the relentless sound of bombing inevitably evokes their questions: "whose home was just bombed?: who was killed by that shelling?: when will we be in the site of the next bombing?: Shall we stay here or run a block away.? And in which direction.?"

Ahmed often wondered if he would be alive tomorrow, after nights of heavy bombing. But he has refused to leave the risky north because

"I have to be with my circus team and help the traumatized children with entertainment and laughter." In the third week of the war, he wrote me, "If I die, please tell the world my name and that I loved children." He and his clowns and stilt walkers, jugglers and acrobats have been an invaluable resource for everyone in Gaza. Amazingly he was among the few fortunate whose home had not been destroyed. That is, until last week...and now his family is homeless. We knew it was only a matter of time.

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His family of 6 has begun to live in one room. “Dvora” he texts, “I am sitting in a 4x4 room, I feel suffocated.” As I am writing this, Ahmad calls. The internet is weak but I am able to see his face. He introduces my image on his phone to the children that surround him. We smile and wave at each other. One girl, 8 years old, asks, “Can you send us chicken and eggs?” A bank wire is on its way to Ahmed, which must go through a cousin’s bank account in Jerusalem first. Getting money to Gaza is complicated at best, and often impossible.

They are all living a nightmare from which there is no awakening. It has become my nightmare too, since October 7.

My friend Younis Al Jakhbeer is living a different kind of nightmare, a Gazan in Diaspora. Younis is an intense and handsome former ‘Parkour Gaza’ athlete, which was his identity when I met him in 2015, when I was on my first of 2 medical missions to Gaza, which is how my journey of knowing Gazans began. Younis is now married to a Polish Jew, with whom he managed to immigrate to Glasgow, Scotland, several years ago. I stayed with them for some days in 2020.

He actually got into Gaza in October to help his family, but after a couple of weeks they insisted, for his well-being, that he return to his wife Jola in Scotland. Reluctantly he did.

I just saw his latest post on FB: “My niece now a martyr. My brother’s young daughter, Batoul, died of hunger and thirst. Batoul remained suffering for weeks and nights. We could not take her to the hospital because all were shut.” He is angry at all who do not help his people. Younis tells me that to be a Gazan in diaspora is to feel like you are not in reality. “I can’t sleep. I can’t be happy. I can’t talk to people authentically. I don’t want to make them cry. Honestly, I wish I were in Gaza. It is harder for me to be here. Nothing here is real. Only what is in Gaza is real to me now.”

How do Gazans cope? “Alhamdullilah. It is God’s will.” They practice patience. But their patience is, indeed, maxed out. They have strength that is now worn thin. They are intelligent, well-educated, creative, resourceful and loving. Those qualities are still intact. They are good humored, laugh a lot and don’t allow themselves to lose control of emotions. But as Cousin Zaina, 22 years old says, on one of her paintings, “We pretend to be patient, but we are broken inside.”

This war is too much, and must end, asap.

I am an Ashkenazi Jew, with father and 4 grandparents hailing from Ukraine, Belarus, and Poland. I was raised a secular humanist Jew, with a

foundation of Yiddish left wing culture. For me Judaism was always about following the Rabbi Hillel story, when a stranger asked him to explain the Torah while standing on one leg. “Don’t do to another what you would not have done to you. The rest is commentary. Go study.” Tikkun Olam ---Mend the world, is another critical teaching. Do what you can to make the world a better place. My Gazan friends all know I am Jewish. “We have no problem with Judaism or Jewish people. It is Israel we have the problem with.” Of course. I believe that the Israeli government has been defying Judaism for a long time, now more than ever, doing hideous damage to another core principle:

“Pursue Justice and Justice alone”.

So I am doing what I can with what I have. You may ask what you can do. I encourage people, if they can, to donate to one or more of the many GoFundMe’s circulating to help Gazans. It is one way Gazans are taking action to raise money to survive. There is a new grassroots non-profit, on the ground in Cairo, meeting many needs of Gazan refugees. It is called Humanity Project <https://thehumanityproject.world>. They are doing great work matching people with resources and funds. They need financial support. Lastly, I am happy to connect you with individuals in Cairo or Gaza and you can be a support to them directly. Or you can PayPal me at @dvorahkost and your money will go to whatever need is arising among those I know, which is all the time something. I’m happy to answer any questions, you can contact me at dvorahkost@gmail.com

Pacific Call Editor’s Comment: The United States needs to make a complete policy change vis-à-vis the situation in Israel-Palestine. The US has the power to stop the genocide in Gaza by denying Israel weapons and diplomatic cover. As Fellowship of Reconciliation members, we know that **only justice can bring peace.**

Here is a link to the Jewish Voices for Peace on **Facing the Nakba:** <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/about-facing-the-nakba/>, a good place to start for those who don’t know the long history of the conflict.



The Chinese Economic Miracle: 1979 to the present

by John M Repp

Keyu Jin was an exchange student from mainland China who came to the United States in 1997. She realized very soon that even politically progressive Americans had little understanding of life in China. She went back home every summer so she kept up her contact with China. She studied economics and eventually got a Ph.D. from Harvard and is now teaching at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her book The New China Playbook: Beyond Socialism and Capitalism (Swift Press, 2023) is her effort to educate English speaking readers about China and the “economic miracle” that has taken place since 1979.

China started to change their economic policy step by step in 1979, and from 1979 to 2023, China’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product) grew by an average of 8.93% in almost 45 years per Wikipedia) The annual percentages go up and down, from about 2% in 1989 to almost 14% in 2007.

This growth absolutely amazed economists in the West. A two or three percent per year GDP growth is considered very good in the West.

How could the Chinese do such a thing? Jin tells us big picture that it is because China is a unique combination of socialism and capitalism. The Chinese call it “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. The political system is centralized. The Communist Party of China (CPC) is the only political party allowed in China, but the economy is decentralized. The CPC still makes 5-year plans and as “investor, regulator, and intellectual property owner” the State is powerful, but is not the only economic entity. There are thousands of private companies operating in China now and a number of rich individuals. China has 814 billionaires in 2024.

Jin writes: *“Today it is the private sector (in China) that accounts for more than 60 percent of national output, 70 percent of the nation’s wealth, 80 percent of urban employment.”* 30 years ago it was the reverse. Then, the many State Owned Enterprises (SOE) accounted for 60 percent of national output.

At the beginning of the period of spectacular growth, all banks were owned by the government. Those banks were state banks that could make twice as many loans, fund twice as many projects, as could an equivalent sized private bank since the interest came back to the government rather than became a source of profit for private owners. In the last few

years, private banks have been allowed.

In 40 years China has achieved a level of industrialization that took 200 years in Europe and the United States. Today the vast majority of Chinese families, over 800 million individuals, have been lifted out of poverty. They are not as materially rich as people in the United States or Europe. For example, they have an average living space of 444 square feet as compared to Americans whose living space is on average 2000 square feet. But the new generation, born after the revolutionary one-child policy, lives totally different from those alive during the civil war that began almost a hundred years ago.

A bit of history: Chinese peasants led by Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party started armed struggle in 1927. China had been occupied by many European powers starting with the British invasion in 1839. One of the first instances of Chinese resistance we call the “Opium war” which ended in 1842. Great Britain won that war. From that time until the victory of the People’s Liberation Army in 1949, European nations and Japan forced unequal treaties on to and partially occupied parts of China. That whole era China now calls “the Century of Humiliation.” The painful memory that has come down through the generations is as an important motivator of the Chinese economic success.

But another part of the equation is Chinese culture and tradition. For thousands of years, China has had an educated class who administered their country. Education and achievement have been valued as a way for individuals to honor their families. China before “the Century of Humiliation” was a rich (in the world context) and successful country. Jin tells us some ancient Chinese history in more detail as she explains what “Chinese characteristics” might be.

China had its ancient bureaucracy, called *tiaotiao kuaikuai* (lines and blocks), where the top person could communicate instructions all the way down to smallest administrative unit, and these vertical lines of command are combined with horizontal lines reaching out to every place in the country. There was a higher educational system and an examination system for aspiring bureaucrats. They studied literature, the arts, calligraphy and Confucian texts. Jin’s father was sent to the countryside during cultural revolution to clean out hog slaughtering houses, but came back into the city to take an exam in 1979, just after the exam system was reinstated. That allowed her family to succeed.

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There were several unsuccessful attempts by Mao to encourage industrialization. After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping came to power and he broke with socialist orthodoxy. He was a pragmatist, so after 1979, the Chinese Communist Party allowed private corporations from outside China to come in and employ Chinese workers at wages much lower than what they would have received in the West. However, in exchange for this privilege, the Chinese would be able to learn and use the technology on their own. This was the deal and it was a brilliant strategy.

Now that the extreme poverty of immediate post revolutionary war China (1949) has been overcome with over 40 years of spectacular growth, what can we expect next? Most western economists and commentators who have looked at the recent progress have always predicted that the spectacular growth could not last. But China is determined to continue to develop and they look to new technology. Keyu Jin thinks they must expand their service economy.

One direction they are taking is shown by the fact that today China is "both the largest consumer and producer of electric vehicles." (p.9) If you want to see some of the new EVs (electric vehicles) go to <https://www.nio.com/> Sadly, these new electric vehicles cannot be purchased in the United States. The Biden Administration put on a tariff of over 100% on some popular models. Old China watchers remember the 1980's pictures of thousands of bicycle riders going through Chinese cities. Today, those streets are full of automobiles. Pictured below is a Nio model ES6 with a range of over 380 miles per charge, costing, if it were available in the US, \$52,000.



Sadly, as a result of China's industrialization, their carbon dioxide emissions are now twice what the United States produces, although the per capita emissions are about one-half as much as ours.

In addition to EV's, China is rolling out more affordable housing, prioritizing access to healthcare

for their aging population , and building efficient infrastructure like miles of high speed rail. Jin gives us the best of China and she is believable.

Maybe we can learn something from this study. Perhaps we should start thinking of one way to a successful economy is as a combination of socialism and capitalism rather than a pure socialist system, like the Soviet economy until 1989 or a pure capitalist economy like the U.S. economy now. Other very successful countries in northern Europe like Norway and Denmark are also a mix of capitalism and socialism.

Many political figures in the U.S. see the economic miracle of China as a threat to the USA. Obama pushed for "a pivot to the East", meaning more military bases and military alliances, to prepare for a possible war against China. Indeed, economic competition plays a role in geopolitical competition. And China is preparing to defend itself militarily.

We must insist our government stop playing geopolitics and concentrate on the climate crisis. We need to take care of our common environment and that is a project that both China and the United States, and the rest of the world, can undertake cooperatively.

Private Equity is Plundering America

by John M Repp

What were called "leveraged buyouts", a term we heard quite often after the 2008 economic collapse, are now used by private equity firms to take a public corporation private. For the last 20 years or so, these vulture firms find a corporation that has assets worth a lot more than the stock price indicates. They borrow money and to buy enough shares to take control of the board and make it a private company. Then they sell off any especially valuable parts of the company, load what is left of the company with a huge debt, and then sell the whole thing after five years or so, all at a profit plus large fees for their "work". Currently, there are less than half as many public companies listed on stock exchanges than there were 30 years ago in part because of this phenomena. Private equity firms are the robber barons of our time.

One part of the economy where this has been done often is the health care and nursing home sector. Academic studies show that in the nursing homes owned by private equity firms, there is ten percent more deaths. Why? Because the private equity owners **cut staff in order to make the firms "more efficient"**. There are also ten times as many bankruptcy filings after they sell the firm because of the huge debt they leave it with.

This deadly process is described in the book These are the Plunderers: How Private Equity Runs and Wrecks America. by Gretchen Morgenson and Joshua Rosner (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2023).